2: Barrett E-5 (no date) 1917 NT20 Washo NT20

136 174 chiefly by the rabbit and various other small mammals; that of the Sierra region by larger mammals, such as the mountain sheep, deer, and bear.

[133] Even in the arid section of this area there were fairly large streams fed by the melting snows of the high Sierra, and fish of various kinds were abundant. In fact fishing was a highly important vocation, even of the Paiute living over in the region still farther to the east, especially about Pyramid, Winnamucca, and Walker lakes. In the higher mountain section of the Washo country, notably at Lake Tahoe, fishing was, perhaps, the most important phase of this culture. The heavy snows made these higher altitudes undesirable for winter residence, but the Indians spent much time there during the summer months, attracted especially by the abundance of lake trout.

[226]

●[132] [221]

101 174 177 Of the two environments of the Washo, that of the arid Great Basin rather predominated, which fact, combined with the facility of communication and the consequently more frequent association of the Washo with their eastern neighbors than with those to the west, produced a culture in which Great Basin features are somewhat in the ascendancy. However, there are many features of the Washo culture which are very similar to those of the Miwok and Maidu of the California area.

[171]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION.

177 182 Since the coming of the whiteman and the consequent dispossession of the Indians, the social system of the Washo has been largely disrupted. The following outline of their social organization, therefore, depicts the aboriginal condition of the Washo, though at the present time no villages in the old sense remain, and chieftainship is largely nominal.

621 [594] The social organization of the Washo is primarily based upon the family unit. The village community is the largest division and each village is entirely distinct from all the others. Apparently there is no approach to a tribal organization, though this exists among the tribes immediately to the east.

[619]

5:Kroeber E-5 (no date)1925 NT20 Washo NT20

two rivers has not been ascertained with accuracy. It seems to have been but a little below Reno and Carson City. Long Valley Creek, which drains northwestward into Honey Lake, a Californian stream, was also in their possession. West of the crest of the Sierra they had no settlements, but the Miwok acknowledged their hunting rights on the upper Stanislaus nearly as far down as the Calaveras Big Trees. They may have enjoyed similar privileges elsewhere. Where there are no winter villages, information is often conflicting: boundaries may have been in dispute, or amicably crossed. If the Washo hunted on the North Stanislaus they may have come down the Middle Fork also, or frequented the Calaveras, Cosumnes, or American. Sierra Valley has been assigned both to them and the northeastern Maidu. The deep snows prevented more than temporary occupation. Honey Lake, too, may have been more largely Washo than the map (Pl. 48) shows, or entirely forbidden to them.

Lake Tahoe is central to Washo territory, and was and is still resorted to in summer, but its shores are scarcely habitable in the season of snow.

The Washo call themselves Washiu or Wasiu. The names applied to them by their neighbors are unknown, except for northern Maidu Tsaisuma or Tsaisū. Northern Miwok Hisatok or Histoko means merely "easterners."

The Washo were at times in conflict with the adjacent Northern Paiute, whom they call Paleu, and by whom they are said to have been defeated about 1860.

NUMBERS.

There are the usual statements, some made as much as 50 years ago, about enormous decrease and degeneration or impending extinction; but actually the Washo seem to have suffered less diminution as a consequence of the invasion of our civilization than the vast majority of California Indians. Estimates of their population were: In 1859, 900; 1866, 500; 1892, 400; 1910, 300. The Federal census in this last year enumerated over 800, about one-third in California and two-thirds in Nevada, some three-fourths or more being full blood. As the Washo are distinctly separated from the "Paiutes" and the "*California Diggers*" in the local American consciousness, it is not likely that this figure involves any erroneous inclusions of consequence. Their lack of any reservation, and the semisdjustment of their life to civilized conditions, leading to a scattering habitation on the fringes of white settlements, have evidently caused a persistent underestimation of their numbers.

Their original strength may have been double what it is to-day; 1,500 or under seems a likely figure in view of the nature of their country, their solidarity, and their unity of speech.

[this plate has not been processed]
--Handy 5-1

13 The physical environment of Washo territory is marked by its variety of terrain, climate, flora, and fauna, primarily due to variations in altitude 133 within a comparatively small area. The Sierra Nevada rises gradually to the east of the central valley of California from near sea level to peaks over 10,000 feet in altitude, then it drops abruptly on the eastern slope to about 36 5,000 feet. Generally the Washo lived at 4,500 to 5,500 feet in the valleys 133 east of the Sierra Nevada; around 5,500 to 7,500 in the highlands; and their treks took them down to 3,000 feet on the west side of the Sierra. This gave them a wide range of habitats in mountain-valley terrain.

132 The highlands and western slopes had yellow pine, fir, and hemlock [137] vegetation; a transitional and boreal life zone; humid mesothermal and microthermal climates; and zones receiving between 10 to 60 inches of annual precipitation. In the mountains the summers are warm, with rains through July. Snows start in November, followed by cold weather with freezing nights until April.

[137] In the lowlands to the east of the Sierra Nevada the Washo had pinon and juniper vegetation, an upper sonoran life zone, and an arid-cold-steppe [241] climate (Elsasser 1960, 3-6). These areas have 100-140 days of growing season and all farming requires irrigation (Department of Economic Development n.d.). The weather station at Minden, Nevada is 4,730 feet above sea level. It has recorded an annual precipitation of 8.73 inches, an average growing season of 144 days from May 29 to September 20, a high maximum temperature of 109° F. and a low maximum of -24° F.

Throughout Washo territory the average variability of annual precipitation is around 20-25%. In the months of December through February 60-70% of possible sunshine is received and the figure is 80-90% in the months of June through August.

433 The mountains and lakes (especially Lake Tahoe), the high percentage of [457] sunny days, and legalized gambling in Nevada make tourism the major industry [233] in Washo territory today. Cattle raising and dairying are the most important [234] agrarian industries. Lumbering and mining are of minor importance (Department of Economic Development n.d.).

[315] Compared with other tribes in the Great Basin the Washo occupied a very [36] abundant environment. Hamilton described the Truckee River country in 1844 [161] as "a hunter's paradise, with the streams full of fish and blue grouse in every [13] direction" (Sieber 1951, 142). This abundance is reflected in the fact that the Washo had a higher population density than any other Great Basin tribe. Kroeber (1947, 137) gives a figure for the Washo that comes out as 2.4 square miles per person. The average population density for all of the Great Basin was roughly 15 square miles per person (Steward 1938, 46).

and slightly roasted in hot sand. This would form a sort of rouge stick. It was also applied on previously greased skin.

The yellow (waltsatsini) and black (w¢lyauwi) pigments were mixed with fat or grease. Black came from a mineral, powder, or soot. These colors stayed on only a short time, the black an hour or two and the yellow slightly longer.

The white pigment (dip¢k) was a chalk mixed with water that would stay about as long as the black. One place this was gathered was in the south central end of Carson Valley.

One design for war was red all over and then 1/2 black and 1/2 white over that. This was thought to make the warrior partially invisible. When the tribe divided for games the west side (tanglel¢l tayadi) would paint their faces red, braid their hair, and would not wear a feather. The east side (paolel¢l tayadi) used white face paint and wore an eagle feather in their hair.

Houses

Ingalls (1913, 23) wrote "They are more filthy than beasts, and live in habitations which, summer and winter, are nothing more than circular inclosures, about five feet high, without roof, made of artemisia or sage-brush, or branches of cedar thrown around on the circumference of a circle, and which serve only to break the wind. As the temperature in winter must at times be as low as zero, it will be perceived they must suffer considerably. Anything like a covered lodge, or wick-e-up of any sort, to protect them from rain, cold or snow, Captain Simpson did not see among them."

The root for house in Washo is angal. The winter house is galis dangal, the sweat house is tashmangal, and the brush blind and fishing house is ma?angal. The Washo also built a summer or temporary shelter (gadu) and a summer shade (ta?a).

The galis dangal (Plate V,A) literally means "winter house", but it was used the year around or left in the summer and returned to in the winter. If it had been built by a family one winter and the next summer someone of the family died while at Lake Tahoe or elsewhere away from the galis dangal, the family would return sometime that year to the galis dangal to tear it down, leaving everything to rot. A less common alternative was to burn the dwelling. The deceased would be buried wherever he died. The practice was to tear the building down when a member of the family who had lived in it died, even if the death did not occur within the house. In recent years it became the

WASHO PREHISTORY: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH

by John A. Price

Anthropological research dealing with the Washo Indians and their aboriginal territory has produced a considerable body of descriptive data, much of it amassed in the past decade. This paper will review that portion of the data pertaining to prehistory in Washo territory.

Washo territory in the middle 1800's centered on Lake Tahoe in California and Nevada and the areas immediately to the north, east and south. Except for occasional wider ranging for gathering or trade, Washo territory extended from the south shore of Honey Lake south to Sonora Pass and the West Walker River in California. East to west their territory extended from the Pinenut Mountains in Nevada to several miles west of the main crest of the Sierra Nevada in California.

The physical environment of Washo territory is marked by its variety of climate, flora and fauna resulting from the variations in altitude which occur within a comparatively small area. The Sierra Nevada, a great tilted block, rises gradually to the east of the central valley of California from near sea level to peaks over 10,000 ft. in altitude and drops abruptly on its eastern slope in Nevada to around 5,000 ft. in elevation.

The Washo territory is characterized by yellow pine and fir vegetation in the highlands and by pinyon and juniper in the lowlands, ranging through Boreal, Transitional and Upper Sonoran life zones. A humid microthermal climate with 20 to 35 in. of precipitation annually obtains in the mountains while an arid cold-steppe climate is found in the low valleys. In the mountains the summers are warm with rains through July, snows starting in November, and cold weather with freezing nights until April. Snow often reaches more than 15 ft. in depth in some places in the mountains.

There are several estimates of Washo population. Fairfield (1916, 13-14) wrote that "In 1859 Major Dodge, the Indian Agent, reported that they number about 900"; Kroeber (1925, 944) estimated around 1500 for A.D. 1770; Lowie (1930, 301) wrote that "recent figures indicate approximately 300"; and Merriam and d'Azevedo (1957, 615) wrote that "Present population is variously reported at between 400 and 1000 individuals; the figures on file at the Nevada Indian Agency in Stewart, Nevada, support the larger estimates."

[for an additional note regarding the preparation of this paper, see p. 92 -- Analyst]